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BULLETIN  
OF THE  
AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.

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**Vol. XXVI**

**1894.**

**No. 2**

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THE JAPANESE LIFE AND CUSTOMS AS  
CONTRASTED WITH THOSE OF  
THE WESTERN WORLD.

(WITH THE TREATY QUESTION.)

KINZA RIUGÉ M. HIRAI.

In your thought the name of my country, Nippon, the true name of Japan, is very often preceded by the expression long-secluded, self-isolated and other similar adjectives, as if Japan declined to come into contact with foreign nations from the first formation of her society. Quite to the contrary; since our history began, whenever foreigners have happened to visit Japan, they have always been welcomed by us. And if we appear to have held an attitude of seclusion, there have been two reasons for it. Properly understood, they will rectify the distorted notion often entertained by Western people. First, I wish you to think a few moments on the history of the Occident. Our authentic history traces back twenty-six centuries, and what were

the people of the present civilized world of Europe doing at that time? They were, you may say, all heathen, as Jesus Christ was not yet born.

It is not easy to decide what the movements of the nations of the world were, in the ages of which we have no precise record. At best we can only make hypothetical supposition. As far as the generally accepted chronology stands, the Greeks emigrated toward the East eleven centuries B.C., but they did not go beyond Asia Minor. In the fourth century, Alexander carried his sweeping victory to the farther East, but stopped in the middle of India; and the vast tracts beyond were entirely left untouched by the Hellenic civilization. Later, during the first century B.C., when the Roman Cæsar moved his unconquerable army across the Alps, the modern civilized nations, such as France, Germany and England, were inhabited by the savage races of Gauls, Franks, Saxons, Britons, etc. At that time no one knew the existence of such an immense continent as America; much more the small Island Empire of Japan was never even dreamed of. Therefore, if you speak of Japan as secluded, I will say that America was certainly as secluded until 400 years ago.

After many vicissitudes, civilization was more evenly extended over European countries and the age of expeditions commenced, and the final result was the discovery of America. Then the whole of Europe turned its eyes toward this continent and became rather indifferent to the Orient. The stream of emigration poured into this immense land of Paradise, and the rigorous toil and suffering of the early settlers was rewarded by the bloody struggles with England, ending in the Dec-

laration of Independence. It was not till then that the American nation could extend her friendship or even her thought to our small Island Empire in the furthest corner of the Pacific Ocean. Therefore, I think we may safely conclude that Japan was not exclusive, but that foreign nations did not know and had not time to come to her, and that Japan also did not know or go to them.

While this was the general condition and tendency of the West, some of the European nations took notice of Japan much earlier than the others. In 1543, a Portuguese ship, after great stress of weather, was driven to the shores of Japan and anchored at last in the harbor of Bungo, a port in an island south of Japan. This seems to have been the first European vessel which came to our country, and a free trade commenced from that time between the countries of Japan and Portugal. Afterward the Dutch made their way to us and commercial transactions were established with them.

With this introduction of commercial relations, the Portuguese soon introduced also priests of the religion they professed. As many Western authors acknowledge, not the slightest opposition was made to the introduction of either trade or religion, but all were received with open arms. Such was the spirit of toleration that the Government as well as the people made no objection to the preaching of Christianity, and hundreds of thousands of natives were converted. But unfortunately they caused a bloody rebellion against our Government which took about a year to suppress. This was the reason why the promulgation of the Gospels was once prohibited until about half a century ago.

This was the reason why we were cautious against some nations of Christendom, and this was the reason why we approved exclusion. Some of the Western people censure us with the persecution of Christians, but there was no persecution nor any religious antagonism. The political necessity to maintain independence made it imperative to prevent the coming of dangerous elements which might have upset the nation. To prove that my statement is correct, I will refer you to passages from *United States' Japan Expedition by Commodore Perry*, published in 1856 by order of the Congress of the United States. The author, in one place, speaking in regard to the first license given to the English by the Japanese Government in about 1613, says: "These certainly were privileges of the most liberal kind, and conclusively show that the original policy of Japan was not at all one of exclusion; and that Europeans may thank themselves for the introduction of that rigorous system which has so long shut her ports against the commerce of *nearly* all the civilized world. The Japanese, when they discovered that foreigners were conspiring to take their country from them, did not choose to permit it; and, as the shortest mode of preventing it, sent out such foreigners as were in the country, and forbade any more to come in. Now, whatever doubts may be entertained as to the wisdom or expediency of *such* a remedy, no sane man will question the right, or find fault with the desire, of the Japanese to keep Japan for themselves. If, unfortunately, some of the conspirators were European ecclesiastics, they justly paid the penalty of expulsion from the kingdom for making their religion a part of

their politics. The blunder was their own, not that of Japanese." If you read, you will perceive that the author of the book clearly and firmly defends our position. But it must be borne in mind that though affairs were as he describes, our trade and communication with the Dutch and the Oriental nations was never suspended, and there was no time of real seclusion. I admit, however, that our people were very guarded against Christian nations from various causes beside the facts stated above. If those causes were understood, they would be found sufficient to arouse alarm even in the minds of peaceful Americans.

But the time arrived to break off the former prudential policy when, in 1853, the United States of America sent Commodore Perry to our country, and the treaty of amity was stipulated between both countries. Then all European Powers came to us in succession, and this brought about transitional movements in all affairs in Japan.

It is said that Christopher Columbus obtained the map and story of Marco Polo in regard to Japan, and when the adventurer first set sail towards the West his aim was to come to Japan. "Accordingly, when he landed on Cuba, he believed that he had reached the goal of his long-cherished hopes." Really, if America had not been between Japan and Europe, he might have come to our country. But the course of Nature was so arranged that instead of finding Japan, one of the nations on the continent which he *did* discover became the instrument to bring people of the world into contact with our Island Empire.

During forty years since then, there has been con-

stant communication between the West and Japan. Now information concerning our country is very generally published and eagerly sought by the reading public. Yet the descriptions by Western writers of the spirit of our customs and life are in many instances mere suppositions of the imagination of tourists. Prejudice is a strange mental phenomenon, by which a man is deluded to favorable or unfavorable judgment, which may be wholly erroneous. Our proverb for favorable prejudice is, "Abata mō ekubo," which means: the marks of small-pox on the face of a maiden will seem to the eyes of her lover as innumerable dimples. A story is told about a Chinese standing in front of a "Woman's Exchange." He thought that American citizens, when tired of their present wives, could here exchange for others. This seems absurd to you, but learned people in civilized countries are not entirely free from falling into similar irrational conclusions, as we of Japan have had experience. Indeed, as our proverb stands, "Bōzu ga niku kereba, Kesa Kōromō made nikui," that is, if Bōnze (the priest) is detested, even cassocks and robes are abhorred. A traveller with a religious bias sees everything from his own religious standpoint. Our statues and examples of fine art are often considered, by missionaries and some other foreigners, as idols and heathen gods. Even the celebration of our national holidays has in some instances been inveighed against as a heathen custom which ought to be abolished.

Such misconception comes from the fact that the Orient is in many respects the antipodes of the Occident, Eastern ideas of practical things being often quite

opposed to Western notions, even where present environment will hardly warrant the difference. To trace in ordinary affairs and domestic life the contrast between them is amusing as well as instructive; and to search out the reason of the dissimilarity gives a hint of the mental processes of the various races, and is, to say the least, a pretty study in Sociology.

From the microscopic prototypes up to a large tree, and also from the minute protozoa up to the highest class of mammals, man, each organism has evolved and is still evolving its type according to its environment, as scientific investigation gives convincing evidence. A society formed by groups of human beings is an organism on a large scale. This super-organic body takes its definite shape and substitutes another like the common organisms, according to its environment, which, in this case, may be said, though in a very restricted sense, to be modified by the will of the human being. In ancient and modern histories we see various types of civilization developed in the societies of the same human race, because differently situated regarding their environments. For example, the ancient Egyptian, Indian, Greek, Roman and the modern European and American civilizations are different in their types. Now, Japan has had her own peculiar environment, different not only from the Western, but also from other Oriental countries, and has thus developed her present form of society. Her astronomical and meteorological phenomena, including all climatic and tidal changes; her being surrounded by the sea; her distance from other countries; the manner of distribution of her mountains, hills, level lands, rivers and lakes, her fertile and barren



soils; her fauna and flora; her mineralogical source and geological features, including earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, by which Japan is very often visited,—these were and are the natural environment before and after the formation of the society. After its formation her communication with other nations, her internal historical phenomena, her religions and literature, all added to the natural factors stated before, combined in an indescribable method of complexity. This combination finally became manifest in the present state of Japan.

To those who desire to know Japan, the investigation of the above enumerated factors is prerequisite; but a mere knowledge of them does not throw any light on the topic. The precise analytical study of their commingled influences which affected and are still affecting our community is necessary. But now and then we have foreign tourists, destitute of such a preparation, who can never possibly get a real insight into our affairs and ideas, but carelessly cast a hasty glance and then boldly undertake published criticism.

Let me quote here some lines from a Japanese poem, which will give to those who understand it the innermost secret of our life and thought:

“Shiki jima no Yamato gokoro to hito towa ba,  
Asahi ni niwou yama-zakura bana.”

This is from an ode by one of our late patriots, and signifies, “When a person asks of the Japanese Spirit, I will answer; it is like a mountain cherry blossom which emits its fragrant odour to the rising sun.” In other words, a true spirited Japanese is like a cherry blossom in the mountain, no one knows the existence of the

flower, nor does the flower care to be recognized by any person, but it constantly emits the fragrance of virtue unseen and unheralded. The poetical expression "rising sun" has a double meaning: one is Japan (the country), and the other is, that when a person investigates clearly, he will discover the purity of the Japanese Spirit.

This trait of character comes from the innermost essential heart of the nation. Foreigners may easily recognize it by an examination of the material objects of Japan, such as houses, furniture, costumes, etc. Our dress is not gay nor gorgeous on the outside, except when used for theatrical performances. Indeed, in many cases an unpretentious cotton cloth is lined with costly silk stuff. Our boxes, tables, drawers, etc., are sometimes more finely finished and richly ornamented in the inside and at the back than on the outside and front. Our houses are very plain in front, and invariably surrounded by unadorned walls, but in the rear, out of sight, are beautiful gardens and costly works of art. We have no costly façades or pretentious front doorways, but inside, we have beautiful lacquer and inlaid work. Our reception room for guests is not specially adorned, but valuable bric-a-brac and furniture are kept out of sight of strangers in a fire-proof house called "Kura," and taken out for display only on great occasions. This spirit is constantly noticeable in the people and their customs. We may not always appear as refined and moral as themselves to the Occidental eyes, but the inner spirit of our people is never vulgar or brutish. Even our confections, our cakes and candies, contain the sweeter core inside; in

contradistinction, I notice many of your cheaper cakes are covered with delicious stuff outside, and are sometimes hard and tasteless within. Your pie is made something like our Japanese cake ; even with the pie I notice there are often incisions to show inside from the outside. I heard in Chicago that a groceryman was devising a new invention by which he intends to turn the watermelon inside out, so that he can spare himself the necessity of saying, " I guarantee." Permit me to say our people and their customs are like the watermelon as Nature made it. They may not appear perfect from the outside to the supremely refined and moral Occidental eyes, but as to the inside, I *will guarantee it!*

As stated before, till the time of Commodore Perry, our country stood to the Western World as a shy maiden to a rather indifferent youth. They were mere friends. At last America, the heart of the youth, throbbed and made a proposal of the treaty for eternal amity. Japan accepted the offer with much gratitude, and has been devoted to him with sincerity and constancy ever since. But the husband has acquired a strange habit. Too often when he faces his wife, he looks at her through colored spectacles of prejudice, the lenses of which only magnify imperfections. Of course it must naturally follow that to his eyes she appears often deformed or grotesque. True ! once in a while when he is in special good humor, he may see and acknowledge a good point here and there. But is it not a pity that during forty years of the wedded life the true spirit of Japan is so little understood by her spouse, and may it not be possible that there is a certain

egotism (not to say conceit on his part) which stands in the way of a better understanding! Now, you may be larger and stronger as a nation, but does mere bulk or muscle constitute essential superiority! Why then need your admiration (when you accord it) be of a patronizing order? Upon what is your estimate founded? I do not know how it is in your country, but in the history of Japan, to carry out the simile, the wife retains an exalted station. She is counsellor and adviser to the husband. Our word "tsuma," wife, is an abbreviation of the word "mutsumaji," meaning intimate or fraternal, and she is the intimate comrade of her husband. Therefore, in many cases the same Japanese word is used to denote husband or wife. Certainly, there should be no unfavorable discrimination. Speaking of marriages, it is a great mistake if you suppose that wives are bought or hired for limited term in Japan, as some Western writers state or imply. On the contrary, no women, not even the poorest, can be bought, except those wanton in prostitution. A sketch of the marriage custom in Japan will easily, by the importance given to the ceremony, convince you of the error of such an idea.

As the troubles of life, its trials and struggles begin with matrimony, and a happy or unhappy existence in this world hangs to a general extent upon it, the wedding ceremonial is considered one of the grandest and most important experiences in Japanese life. Although the mode differs somewhat in various localities, there is an unchangeable custom common everywhere. As to the love-making and preliminary engagement of the young people, it is quite the same as in your own country.

Before the wedding, the prospective bride and groom each chooses out of the relations or intimate friends a gentleman or a lady as "nakōdo," master of ceremony, through whom the bride sends, as the sign of contract or pledge to the bridegroom, the wedding dress and other presents popularly accepted as a symbol of good luck, together with a note and the list of her relations (written gracefully on paper of the best kind, always used on such occasions). These things are put on a valuable square-shaped tablet or tray of lacquer work, and covered with a nicely lined and gorgeously embroidered spread, made of silk, satin or some other costly material.

The "nakōdo," arrayed in full dress, goes to the bridegroom and salutes him. Indeed, the meeting of the guest and host is in itself quite an event, and consumes considerable valuable time. After endless bowing and etiquette, the master of ceremony thus addresses the bridegroom: "By unknown causes and effects you are about to marry Miss Hano (Flower), and I take great pleasure in congratulating you on this happy and eternal union; and here is a little gift from her as the pledge of the espousal." This is received with equally polite and ceremonious salutation by the groom, who in his turn, on the next day or several days afterward, sends by his manager to the bride with the same form of civility the pledge, which consists of the wedding dress for her, and also similar gifts to those which she presented. After this exchange of evidences of a contract, the wedding day is appointed, when generally in the evening she goes to the house of her husband. The handsome bride (sometimes not so handsome), her mother, female relations or lady friends, elaborately

arrayed in splendid robes, wearing white bonnets of silk, attended by the finely attired bridesmaids and escorted by her master of ceremony and male relations, in pompous dresses of occasion, make a procession, all riding in carriages, mostly Jinrikisha. The marriage ordinarily takes place at the house of the groom.

Not dwelling too much upon the details, one thing which will be worth noting in the decoration of the house is a miniature island, mounted upon a little table, which will be presented by some of the relations or friends, and placed in the matrimonial parlor. In the centre of this little island there are planted pine and plum trees and bamboo. The evergreen pine is the emblem of constancy and eternal love ; the bamboo, being hollow, nothing is secreted within it, represents sincerity and truth between parties, while in another sense the knots of bamboo are associated with the idea of changeless devotion and kindness ; and as the "ume" (a kind of plum) begins to bloom in the snow and is considered to be indefatigable, it represents undaunted human energy or character which will persevere under heavy burden and difficulty until the fruitage appears. Beneath the trees there are storks and turtles. Our legends tell us that the stork lives a thousand years and the turtle ten thousand years. Both suggest the expected long life of the new couple. Beside these there are an old man having a broom and an old woman with a dust-pan. This is to show that whenever either one has some unpleasing or exciting mental attitude, it is dust, and should be swept off at once, so that they will continue to live in harmony

till they are old. The above is an allusory instruction for the future of the young couple who are now coming into eternal union. The most conspicuous feature of the marriage ceremony is the attended felicitation or congratulation, beginning with the words, "by unknown causes and effects," and ending, "I congratulate the eternal union," which is exchanged between the bride, the groom and the parents and other friends. Even in the kitchen the same words of compliment are echoed from servants to maids; all express their joy, each to the other, for the happy marriage of their master or mistress. The same expression is addressed by a new servant to the master: "From to-day I am to be allowed to stay in your house by unknown causes and effects." And also, with little modification, it is used to condole a person in mourning from bereavement, as: "But everything depends upon causes and effects." Japan, I may say, is the land of philosophers! Especially on the occasion of marriage this philosophical address is a sort of password for those more or less connected with the parties, and does not cease during several weeks. The new wife and husband have to call on the relations, and the friends and relations who did not happen to be present at the ceremony will pay their later visit.

Our *Yamato womina* (Japanese woman) has not escaped the general criticism and contemptuous scandal of the West, not to say its thorough misunderstanding of her position; while the bitterest reprimands are hurled upon the Japanese man, accusing him of oppression towards women. I must defend at least my own sex from this groundless censure. It is true the posi-

tion of our women has been in times past freer and higher than at present. It could not maintain its old-time stability against the powerful current of the sweeping tide of the Western civilization which dashed against our shores, and naturally there were women in Japan who lost their balance, drifted and finally were washed down by the breakers; yet the number of these unfortunates has been and still is small, and the general mass are yet bathing peacefully (spite of your fears) in the pure stream of mental and moral well-being.

In Japanese history woman has ever held a lofty position. In our country she has never been made a captive, and thus the habit of enslaving her has not come to us as with nations whose business has been pirating on the innocent human race. In such instances it is not an unfrequent case that the savage depredators confine their female captives and compel them to the most shameful humiliations, thus teaching a lesson of corruption to the whole country, and sometimes crystallizing it as the national custom.

As to the position of women of the lower classes, look at the inside life of the Jinrikisha driver, whose business standing is counted among the very lowest. While the husband works hard every day, his wife remains at home and takes care of the household. She retains in her hand all the money that is earned by the husband, and when requested will sometimes sparingly give it to him, very often adding a forcible admonition. On the one hand she has necessity for a strict financial policy for her household and on her husband's account; on the other this stringency is



sometimes made necessary by her own personal expenditure. To go to hear a sermon or to see the theatre or flowers is all the indulgence accorded to her personally ; or if she likes she will spend half a day with the good wives of the neighborhood for chit-chat, indulging comments on the new bride of the house-owner, describing her handsome dress, the style of hair-dressing, the whiteness of her complexion, her blooming cheeks and how many inches long her nose is. Yet she knows the limit of time for such indulgence and will not neglect to do everything necessary for her devoted husband (sometimes not so devoted, perhaps).

In more refined and well-to-do circles the freedom of the wife is kept within narrower bounds, not by the oppression of any one, but because of her having more important household duties and the necessity of executing affairs diplomatically in the absence of her husband. She attends religious services, the theatre, picnics among flowers. She visits her friends and the clubs, for the women of Japan have their friendly, educational, philanthropic, literary and other clubs, as you do here ; and when at home she prepares tea, arranges flowers ; and writing, reading, and other refined amusements are the pastime by which she and the family recreate themselves in leisure hours.

It is hardly necessary to say that the wives of the wealthiest families can have even more spare time for diversion, yet there is rarely found one who devotes her life entirely to amusement. The Japanese woman chooses to do something serious, even when wealthy, keeping herself busy. Her choice of a laborious life

and her apparently humble manner (which is really only the ceremonious expression of our woman's tenderness) have given the impression to foreigners that she is oppressed or kept in an inferior position by man. Why does she wish to keep herself so busy, you may say, if she is the wife of a rich man and surrounded by servants? Our women have a theory, hereditarily transmitted from generation to generation, which says that to live in luxury without doing any good is a mere waste of the treasure of nature; when such treasure is given us, as we spend it we must make up the loss with labor. The human race constituting societies or nations is divided into two parts, one-half being women; children excepted, they are theoretically wives. If women or wives who represent half of the population spend the precious resources of Nature for the purpose of luxury without giving some adequate return, not only does the double burden fall upon the other half (the husbands), but also, as human energy is limited and cannot be doubled, the national wealth must eventually come to an end. The next step will be the poverty of the whole nation, or the necessity for depredation upon other countries, just as the final outcome of dissipation is beggary or burglary.

It is a mistake if you suppose our women do not possess educational advantages equal to your own. From historical times our women could have received their education in any school, college or university of the country, as well as in the special female schools. The fact that we have had many women writers and poets of highest fame, such as Murasaki Shikibu, Akazome Emon, Ono no Komachi, Kaga no Chiyo, etc.,

shows that there has been no prejudice or prohibition against female education, contrary to the popular belief in the Western countries. Especially as to the Japanese literature I will not hesitate to say that it has been preserved in the hands of our women, for men generally pursued the Chinese literature and were rather indifferent towards the native *belles-lettres*. The literary life is not the only vocation for woman in Japan, but she can choose whatever occupation she likes. We have many female physicians, and really certain branches of medicine were never formerly practised by men ; but now man is, after the Western fashion, impinging into woman's domain. We have female teachers of all branches of knowledge and accomplishments, female artists, female orators, female merchants and even female speculators. We have female priests. They give sermons before the public, and have equal rights with the male priests, and are even elected as presidents of the sects to which they belong. At present there are several sects which are presided over by women.

In the time of feudalism, which lasted till twenty-seven years ago, the wives and daughters of knights went to battle, fought as well as men, and in many cases they were better fighters than men. Even our children are familiar with the names of the female warriors of ancient times, as Tomoye, Hangaku, etc. At present our standing army is organized after the Western system, and females are not allowed the privilege of fighting. Notwithstanding this prohibition, in the internal commotions caused by one of our famous patriots, Saigo, only 17 years ago, a handsome battalion of fair maidens attracted great attention and took a prominent

part in the action on the side of the so-called rebels. When I say female fighters or warriors you may imagine perhaps masculine women of a coarse type ; on the contrary, our feminine warriors in the battle are generally slender ; and those who are well trained in chivalric accomplishments look delicate, feminine and graceful, as the Japanese flower "Womina meshi," *Valeriana Officinalis*, to which they are compared.

Not going back to our mythology, since our authentic history began we have had many successful Empresses ; they have been the sole governing sovereigns without the Emperor. Female sovereigns have reigned in other countries ; but what I would like to ask is, if there was ever any country in the world which had in her historical ages a prime minister as well as generalissimo of the female sex ? Outside of mere legendary records I do not remember any such case, except in Japan. It was between the end of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th century. After the death of the first Shōgun, Minamoto no Yoritomo, in Japan, his wife became a very successful minister of the country, perhaps I may be allowed to mention with some pride, as she was the wife of an ancestor of my family.

In Japan ample freedom is given women, but the recent introduction of Occidental customs (not specially American) has greatly changed our system. Where formerly woman had the monopoly (not by law, but by custom) of obtaining her livelihood, man has now invaded her domain. In addition to this encroachment, woman has been deprived of the right to be elected as sovereign. This privilege was hers from the

ages of mythology down to a few years ago. According to our new constitution, which was re-modelled after the Western fashion and promulgated six years ago, it is stated that no female can be chosen as sovereign. Indeed, in olden times, the Japanese were blind enough not to distinguish invidiously between the woman and the man ; but after we Heathen came into closer contact with Western and Christian civilization (so called) we opened our eyes and commenced to know for the first time that men were superior beings ! You of the West will say, doubtless, we have at last learned how to treat women ! To those women in Japan who are trying to extend the suffrage, it may be as well to say at once, that so long as Japan remains in line with the Western civilization, female suffrage has seemed to be hopeless, for the present at least.

Let us turn our attention for a while to the education of the people of Japan. As already hinted, we have had schools of every sort and grade for many centuries, and education has been widely spread and received by the mass of the people. If there was any one who was called "unlettered," unlearned among us (and there is hardly found such a person, for our educational system is very strict), it is meant that he was ignorant of the Chinese characters and literature, but not of Japanese. Chinese characters were introduced into Japan before 285 A.D., when the book (Longo) of Confucius was first brought to us. The adoption of these hieroglyphics dates so far back and they have taken root so well that the pronunciation of them was changed from the original and entirely Japanized. Besides them we have our own Japanese "Iroha"

alphabet, and, according to circumstances, one or the other language is written, or both serve for the purpose at the same time in mixed style. This alphabetical system is a phonetic syllabary consisting of 48 letters, and no labor is spent in spelling ; that is, with 48 letters which are learned very readily, any person can write anything that he desires to express. This is the reason why there is hardly one who cannot write. In ancient days farther back than the time of the introduction of the Chinese literature and the invention of our present alphabet, another system of characters in pure phonetic alphabetism was used. They resemble very much the Roman letters and are called the mythological hieroglyphics. Does this not support some speculation as to the origin of our language ?

Our education does not materially differ from that of Western countries. It is not simply confined to the study of letters, but all other branches of knowledge are considered as well as physical and moral culture, the last of which stands in our estimation the most important of all.

We have still another kind of education. The education of accomplishments, such as drinking and preparing tea, arranging flowers, burning and scenting incense, sewing and fancy needle-work, music, chivalric training (now on the wane), and among certain classes pantomime dancing. Some of the above branches are more generally studied by women. "Utai" and "Nō," very often misrepresented by the Western authors as the religious or sacred song and dance, are the favorite subjects of study mostly for men. "Utai" is our classical literature read in the style of elocution or

recitation, and when it is acted by pantomime it is called "Nō." Its burlesque performance is "Kyōgen."

For all these accomplishments there are schools, and those for music and dancing are very common in America. But what you cannot find elsewhere out of Japan are schools for arranging flowers, teachers for showing how to prepare and drink tea, and young and old pupils for burning and smelling of incense. They do not call it tea-making or flower-arranging. Nor do the Japanese merely take tea as a drink and incense as perfumery. The Japanese is taught to associate tea, flowers, incense, as indeed almost all things, with morality and to philosophize on them. We use the word "michi" (path) to convey the meaning of the word principle or doctrine, as the path of Confucius, path of humanity, so we speak of tea-path, flower-path, etc., that is principle of tea, flower, etc. Indeed, a deep ethical as well as spiritual principle is subtly interwoven, not only with tea or flower-making, but with all other branches of Japanese knowledge, customs and even manners, and no art or learning which lacks such spirit can be considered perfect or wholly desirable by us. Properly understood it is perhaps not so strange that many of our countrymen give years for mastering the spiritual principle of tea, flower or incense. This may sound ridiculous to you. But I think if you practical people of the West look into the matter deeply, a similar principle, whether ethical or philosophical, will be found to be entwined with many things here. If it is not, an apple could not teach you the law of gravitation, and steam would never be harnessed to draw the locomotive.

The above are considered very elegant accomplishments as well as amusements, yet many years' preparation is often necessary to fully appreciate such paths. There are impulsive, energetic Japanese, especially those who are charged with the swift electric current of the West, who impatiently yawn while rapidly running in railroad trains, and surely cannot appreciate amusements of slow and deliberate outgrowth. When the first suggestion of such enjoyment crosses their brain, they wish to see its immediate and full realization ; and Japan is not wanting in places of amusement of a different character to satisfy them.

They are, beside the numberless shows, exhibition dances, theatre, farces, dramatic singers, romantic and comic story-tellers, reciters of war tales and various sorts of story-tellers who relate histories and biographies in a peculiar tone of voice. Though the latter are attended by a lower class people, yet their stories are chivalric and exciting. They are scattered everywhere in towns ; and in large cities, many streets are specially devoted to the places of these entertainments, something like Midway Plaisance in the World's Fair ground of Chicago. There you can enjoy, if you understand our customs and language, from morning till one or two o'clock at night. On Sundays the streets are blocked up by the crowd, for the people there do not take their rest on Sunday, except in this way. Perhaps I may say my favorite resorts were the places of comic story-tellers and farces. Here the gravest and most important looking gentlemen and the quiet and assuming but most aristocratic ladies have their dignity completely upset, and often shed tears through excessive laughter.



When the people are tired of these places of jingling joviality, in winter they go out to see the wild winter views of Nature covered with its silvery shroud. In the hot season, wherever there is water to send a cool breeze, the people will visit the spot for "Suzumi" (to get cooled). Especially at evening and night countless lights of lanterns, bonfires and incessant shooting of beautiful rockets invite and hail the multitude of ramblers. They are all in light dresses, with fashionable Japanese round fans, and stay till late in the short summer night.

In spring and autumn, smiling flowers and crimson maples ornament the landscape, and attract us with such a tremendous force that we become wild with enthusiasm. From nobles to commons, the rich and the poor, maiden and youth, childhood and the gray-headed, all compete to offer their love and adoration to the pure and unadorned beauty of innocent Nature. Here a fair muse suspends from the branches of a tree a couple of long-shaped placards on which her impromptu poems are written, while the soft sound of musical instruments is transported with the fragrance of flowers through the air from the banks of a near stream. There a half dozen people sit in a circle and give their time to admiring Nature, and testing the "sake" (Japanese wine). This will, perhaps, give you a wrong impression and you will feel that our poetic sense is lacking. But with us, it is thought the "sake" (though I personally do not relish it) rather inclines to inflame the poetic sense, as tea is associated with ethics or philosophy. I hear that you have a kind of wine-cup which obliges a person to drink the whole contents

at once, for the glass is so made that it cannot stand upright. We have no such ingenious cup. Our sake-cups are very small and have flowers painted or poems written on them; and "sake" is not gulped down, but sipped little by little, amid natural scenery or in some poetical environment. Really to our Bacchanalian, "sake" is the liquid of the Pierian spring. At the first sight of it, his sensuous thoughts are diverted at once toward a dreamy realm of imagination. When he happens to see the beauty of Nature he associates the thought with the "sake." Our famous ode reads, "Sake nakute, nanno onore ga sakura kana"—without "sake," how can one be a cherry blossom himself?—meaning that unless one can feel within himself the exhilaration and glow of the "sake," as bright cherry blossom opens in the radiance of the sun, so as to be completely unified with it, he cannot fully appreciate the delicate beauty of the flower.

"Hana gari," the flower-hunters, are like the butterflies hovering around the fragrant blossoms. They linger and cannot leave them so long as their contented reverie is undisturbed. Unfortunately their lower nature must be supplied with provision, and the lack of it may urge them to start for home. The servants have meantime shared the general enjoyment and will in good humor put the emptied picnic boxes on their backs. Now and then one sees a jolly optimist cheered by the "sake" carrying a large branch of flowers on one shoulder and a gourd, which has contained the liquor and now survives it, suspended in front from his neck. He goes home dancing and hopping in a zigzag way like a wild little bird, humming a merry song, but in a

discordant voice, and trying all the time to cool his flushed face, while he is really striking alternately the air and his own forehead.

There are many other varieties of amusement, but now let us take a look at other interests,—our philanthropic work, for example. I have heard it said in this country that our religions of Japan are dead faiths, and serve no practical purpose for the good of the poorer classes, as the organization of asylums, etc. In point of fact, far back in the 6th or 7th century A.D., a little after the first introduction of Buddhism into our country, charitable institutions of all kind were established by the Imperial edict, to be organized throughout the land; the consequence of some centuries' experience of this sort was to produce more idlers and vagabonds, and to increase the number of irresponsible parents of uncared-for children. This paradoxical dilemma in philanthropy was finally solved by preferring the more natural and unpretentious course to the public and ostentatious artificial display of charity.

Now, the real parentless children are generally adopted by some family as sons or daughters, and no special buildings are needed to cage them as Lilliputian prisoners.

A poor man, even a beggar, has every means of access to a rich man and can beg to be hired at least as a menial servant, for instance to sweep the garden and yard. If he is honest, he will be promoted to some higher work and even employed as clerk of the store of the master, if he is a merchant; and it is the general custom in Japan, after serving certain years, that he shall receive an amount of capital from his master with

which he can begin his own independent business, using the same business name as his old master.

As to woman, she may serve during her life, being gradually promoted, or she can marry if she chooses.

It is common, and is thought a matter of course, that teachers, professors, physicians, priests, should take in their homes, at their own expense, a number of poor students to feed and educate them. The late private adviser of the Emperor, Mr. Yamaoka, was very generous, especially to young students, and had always four or five hundred poor young men in his house.

Artists, carpenters, farmers, even Jinrikisha men have the poor men as their assistants or inmates of their homes. Those who are naturally reluctant to work and fond of a dissipated life do not come within the range of the above benevolence; and, at the present, the really poor invalids are the only people who are taken care of in special public institutions.

Besides the foregoing national custom, we have public charity laws enacted, by which a certain amount of the fund is provided in each prefecture, and is distributed and paid out for the occasional and extreme cases which necessitate public aid.

Thus, from outside you cannot see any trace of religion in our charity work, and foreigners think that our faiths are merely meaningless idol-worship, without any connection to practical life. Far from it, religion does not mean to us worship in its orthodox sense, but it is the source of Wisdom and Love which ought to be practically applied for the welfare of our fellow-men. I cannot here discuss the profounder questions of religion within the limited space of time at my dis-

posal. The faith of a nation is her Spirit, and it is visibly or invisibly woven with the things of her secular life. Let me say a few words concerning our religious thought, which will serve perhaps as the key to open the secret heart of our people and rectify some heretofore widely accepted misrepresentations in regard to Japan. If you consider that a distinct part of the Japanese people are Buddhists and certain other parts are Shintooists, you are greatly mistaken. And if you think that Japanese Buddhists are the worshippers of Gautama to the exclusion of other great prophets and seers, you are again mistaken. Still, again, if you think that the so-called Buddhist in Japan adheres solely to the doctrine and name of Buddhism, you are once more mistaken. If you hold a similar impression in regard to Shintooism, you are in like error. Really, there is no single person in Japan who is exclusively a Buddhist or a Shintooist, for all teachings existent in the world are conceived as to contain the truth. We are not particular about the name of Buddhism and any other religion of Japan, nor do we care whether they will be entirely forgotten and become extinct in the world, so long as the undying truth of the universe continues being studied under different appellations in different countries. The Buddhist says, "Those are true Buddhists who do not call themselves Buddhists." Your own Shakespeare says, "A rose in any other name would smell as sweet." Our conception regarding all religions of the world may be presented to you, perhaps, through this simile: when a number of persons stand at different points on the seashore in a moonlight night, each of them will see a long

conical shape or pathway of light fall on the water fronting the place where he stands. When he walks, the light, instead of being left behind, follows him and stops where he stops. He thinks that he or those standing with him are the only ones who fully behold the light, for the rest of the sea looks to him like a *black* sheet of water—"nothing." And he is anxious to let other men see the beautiful reflection as he sees it, and insists that his is the only standpoint from which to behold it, and that others who are in distant places look out upon only the dark *benighted* sheet of water. Far from the shore, on the peak of a high mountain, there is another standpoint. Persons there look down upon the sea and know that the moonlight is not a long strip, nor is it confined to the places where the people stand, but the whole surface of the wide ocean reflects the light like a mirror, leaving no place in darkness. None of the views seen from the different points can be false and all of them are true. Sometimes we will linger on the seashore flooded by our own shaft of moonlight, and at other times the soul takes wing to the highest peak, and there beholds a quite different aspect of the wide Universe!

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The above descriptions are only glances at still surviving customs in our country. This poetic old Japan, with the new and more practical renovation, makes a tolerably good compound for the happiness of any reasonable man. But as our proverb says, "No two good things can be obtained at the same time!"

The fact is this :

After Commodore Perry came first to our country in

1858, the Treaty of Amity and Commerce was stipulated between the United States of America and Japan, and also similar ones were made with the European Powers. By this treaty with the Christian Powers we Heathen are deprived of our national right. One of the articles which hamper our right is that concerning the tariff. By this the highest rate of duty which we can impose on the imported goods is five per cent. *ad valorem*. Though many Japanese entertain ideas of free trade, that is a theory of economics, and has no connection whatever with the right in regard to the custom duty. We are deprived of our right to protect our own industries, even when there is a pressing necessity. We have no right, for instance, to prevent the importation of a hundred different kinds of detestable liquors.

This tariff treaty was annulled between the United States of America and Japan in 1878. But as the European Powers do not follow the example of America, the effect is exactly the same. Yet we are sincerely thankful for the precedence of the American nation in abolishing one part of the objectionable treaty.

The next is the Article VI. in the Americo-Japanese treaty and the corresponding articles in the treaties with the European Powers.

According to this, the foreigners in Japan, whether the cases concerning them are civil or criminal, are tried and treated by the foreign authorities residing in Japan and according to the foreign laws. Our judicial power is restricted, so far as the cases of foreigners are concerned, and as to the effect, we cannot keep ourselves from the wrongs which we receive, nor can we ourselves

try those wrong-doers who reside in our own country. Whenever a trouble occurs with foreigners we cannot take it to our own authorities, but are obliged to sue them in foreign courts, and are morally sure, therefore, to lose the case.

Among many cases, I could cite the most notorious, as perhaps the importation of opium by an Englishman in direct opposition to the treaty, and the case of an English steamer, *Normanton*, which was wrecked in our sea, when the Japanese passengers were denied a boat and drowned. The case of the *Chishima* (Japanese man-of-war) and a foreign steamer; the latter struck against and sunk the man-of-war, and the captain of the sunken vessel, who tried to save his life by climbing into the English steamer and was shamefully treated. None of the crew were saved. This case is still a pending question. These are only isolated instances among many cases which were brought before the foreign court and failed to obtain justice. A woman came from America, whose business is to kidnap and hide the young daughters of respectable families. We have, under the existing treaty, no right and no way to punish her. I know also of numberless other cases regarding infamous acts towards our women. There are some Western people in Japan who erect before the entrance of their houses a special post, upon which is the notice: "No Japanese is allowed to enter here."

Our celebration day for the anniversary of our most beloved patriot, the model Japanese, Kusunoki Masashige, was preached against and ridiculed publicly by a foreign teacher of *love*, in the presence of the crowd which assembled before the monument to do honor to



this historical man of valor. Think! had it been in this country on the 22d of February, your beloved Washington's Birthday! What would you have thought had a foreign guest declaimed against *your* revered patriot? Would you not have felt like lynching him? Yet this indignity actually occurred to us several years ago in Kobe.

At home we are morally treated with derision and curtailed in our right by the treaty, while abroad our people receive similar treatment. The latest case was cited in the New York *Tribune*. The writer said merely that our Government has sent Chargé d'Affaires to Guatemala to arrange emigration; the real fact being that several hundred Japanese in the Hawaiian Islands made the contract with a Guatemalan and went to that country. But they were not paid wages according to the contract and were kept as slaves. Two or three only succeeded in escaping, and they complained to the Japanese Consul in Mexico. The same thing was done some time ago, and about three hundred Japanese were taken to the Hawaiian Islands.

The said treaty with Christian Powers was made before our Restoration, and in the time when we were yet young in our relation with Christian Powers and unsophisticated. The feudal officers, from their lack of diplomatic talent, simply relied on the honor of the American Consul, who made the draught of the treaty, and it was accepted by the then Government of Shōgun, commonly known as Tycoon in Western countries. But as it is stipulated, that after 1872, upon the desire of either party the treaty should be subject to revision, we have demanded this many times, and still do demand in vain that justice be accorded us.

If you hear or read some Western descriptions of Japan, you may think that our people are perfectly happy and satisfied. Will not the prosperous nations of Christendom have a little true sympathy for us, if they know that these apparently contented people are really concealing their deepest sighs, and suppressing the tears of blood on this account? Now and then the hidden anguish bursts forth and the voice of its cry is echoed in the papers across the Pacific Ocean. You are so kind that you send your Christian teachers to save our heathen people. Surely these disciples of the Messiah must have communicated to you the real truths about us, and, if it is so, we confess we Heathen Japanese are in perplexity at the indifference and apathy of the Christian West. On one side we are taught by the missionaries of love, and on the other we are denied love by the land where the missionaries come from. Our requests to be accorded justice, to have our rights restored to us, are answered in such way as to emphasize the notion that we are *Heathen*.

I see in the Bible, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also"; but no Japanese can discover there any passage which says, "Whosoever shall demand justice of thee, smite his right cheek, and when he turns smite the other also." Again, the Bible says, "If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also"; but we cannot yet find any clause there which says, "If any man shall sue thee at the law, take away his coat and call him Heathen." We like very much the *theories* the missionaries bring us, yet we confess we are so lost in *heathenish* darkness

that we cannot yet see clearly how you Christian nations live up to your own teaching ; in other words, we fail to see the practical application by you of the truths you would force upon us. There is contradiction somewhere ! Until this enigma is satisfactorily explained, while we cherish the theories of your religion, we will prefer to remain in the deepest centre of benighted heathendom.

If any in the audience have the impression that there has been strong antagonism against Christianity in Japan, as I frankly declared before the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago, I was the first in Japan who ever attacked Christianity—no, not real Christianity but false Christianity—the wrongs done toward us by the people of Christendom. Please do not think that I took this ground because I am a Buddhist priest. My spirit and opinion have been the same since long before I had connection with any Buddhist Church or Temple. It is not in the least from the point of view of the religious standpoint. Even among the Christian elements of the native Japanese this sentiment is noticeable, as the paper presented by Mr. Kishimoto before the Parliament distinctly states that they will not have the Western Christianity, but the Japanese Christianity ; I am so glad to hear this that I will volunteer my assistance for such a movement. At the same time I wish you not to misunderstand me as the blind antagonist against the foreign Christianity ; on the contrary, whether it is American or European, if it is true Christianity and really aims at the advancement and the welfare of Japan, and has the unpretentious desire towards the maintenance of our independence and the

strengthening of our nationality, I will contribute my full power for the cause. But if any religion or teaching, whether Christianity or Buddhism, whether Shintooism or Confucianism, under the disguise of benevolence, intentionally or unintentionally, would crush our nationality and threaten our independence, I will oppose it, and will continue to oppose it, even if it lead me through seas of blood.

This is the spirit of Japan, but has it not also been the spirit of America? Be assured I appreciate the noble points of the history. In it there are two prominent deeds which specially attract my sympathy. Your integrity established this stupendous Republic of America, and your sympathy saved the colored race from abject slavery. The light of the torch lifted up by the Goddess of Liberty in New York Harbor announces to the world that true freedom dwells in this quarter of the globe. You are such a noble nation and you have had such a struggle with the monarchies of the old civilization of Europe!

I feel sure that the circumstances which made the American people declare Independence are in the same sense comparable to the present state of my own country. Will you, of all nations, accede to or permit the injustice of a strong country over the weaker? It is against the spirit of your Constitution! You know well that your extraterritorial power in Japan *is an interference with our home law*, and if you are really sympathetic with us, as you assume, why not correct this? Especially as our government is not and never *has been* a mingling of Church and State, and because we now have a judiciary system modelled on

that of the best nations of Christendom. We, the forty million souls of Japan, wish that your great nation would take the precedence (as was the case with our tariff right), and return to us our national judicial right, which has been *forty years* in your hands.